

## SOME NOTES ON BIRDS, AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW SUBSPECIES

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DURING an expedition to the Cape Province for the purpose of obtaining topotypes of various species, some new and quite unexpected forms were secured. These were unexpected inasmuch as the avifauna of that Province is said to have been thoroughly worked, and the records hereafter given serve to show the folly of such statement.

Amongst the records of importance the following may be noted:

*Crithagra leucoptera* Sharpe. A single adult ♀ was obtained at Lormarins in the Paarl District, one of a small party, the rest of which flew off towards the mountains after I had secured the one; a shower of rain prevented me from following the others. There can be no doubt as to the validity of this species as the immature of *C. albogularis*, which it comes nearest to, have the rump yellow as in the adults.

*Cryptillas victorini*. A specimen was secured in the scrub on the Groot Drakenstein Mountains. So far this species does not appear to have been recorded from so far west. Its call-note is similar to that of *Bradypterus barratti* of the Drakensberg.

*Bradypterus babaeculus* (Vieillot). A specimen of this species was obtained in the rushes on the Berg River at Kersfontein. Reichenow has referred *B. barratti* Sharpe to this species and Stark and Sclater have referred *Luscinola gracilirostris* (Hartlaub) to it. All writers have so far been able to recognize *Bradypterus brachypterus* (Vieillot) from Knysna; but owing to their not knowing that the call-notes of *brachypterus* and *babaeculus* are the same, some confusion has existed as to the identity of the latter. Levaillant, who first collected these birds, figured and described them, recorded *brachypterus* from Outeniqua only, but *babaeculus* from both Verloren Vlei (not far from Berg River) and Outeniqua (Knysna). This has probably also been a cause of error, the explanation of which is very likely that he himself collected the bird at Verloren Vlei and noted its call-note, which he probably remembered also to have heard at Knysna; on the other hand he frequently mentions in his *Travels* the assistance rendered to him in collecting by his faithful Klaas, so we may reasonably conclude that Klaas obtained the Knysna specimen and informed him of its feeble power of flight. Support is lent to this explanation by the fact that he does not mention the call-note of *B. brachypterus*. As a matter of fact the habitat, habits and call-notes of the two species are the same, the only difference between them being that *B. babaeculus* is a much darker bird, as shown by the coloured figure supplied by Levaillant.

### + *Bradypterus transvaalensis* sp. nov.

Lighter coloured in general effect than specimens of *B. brachypterus* from Knysna, but differing more markedly in the shortness of the bill. In *brachypterus* and *babaeculus* culmen measures over 15 mm. and the length of the bill from the anterior corner of the nasal hollow to the tip 9–10 mm. as against less than 14 and less than 8.5 mm. respectively, in the Transvaal specimens.

Type, adult ♂, in breeding plumage, taken at Wakkerstroom, on 25th October, 1909. Also two similar specimens from the same place. "Iris yellowish brown; maxilla brown, mandible pater; tarsi and feet dark flesh colour. Length in the flesh 158 mm." Wing 60, tail 63, tarsus 20, culmen 13.

*Dryodromas fulvicapilla silberbauer* subsp. nov.

Differs from the typical *D. fulvicapilla* from the eastern districts of the Cape Province in being altogether darker coloured, the crown only slightly more inclined to reddish than the back (which is also darker than in typical specimens), the throat and belly less white, on the former hardly noticeably whitish.

Type, adult ♀, taken at the foot of the Groot Drakenstein Mountains, on the estate of C. C. Silberbauer, Esquire, "Lormarins," in the Paarl District, in September, 1917. Also another similar specimen taken at the same time. "Iris dull tan yellow; bill flesh coloured, culmen and tip brown; tarsi and feet flesh coloured. Length in the flesh 116 mm." Wing 46, tail 42, tarsus 17.5, culmen 10.5.

Note. Females of the typical birds are paler than males, so that possibly the males of this more western subspecies are still darker than the females secured.

*Euplectes capensis macrorhynchus* subsp. nov.

Differs from the typical *E. capensis* from Cape Town and neighbouring districts in having an even larger, or in fact, an enormously powerful, bill, the culmen in the type measuring 21 mm. in an adult male in full breeding plumage, as against only 18-19 mm. This measurement alone, however, does not give an impression of the increase in size, for the breadth and depth are still greater in proportion. In an immature ♂ taken about the same time and place, the culmen is 20.5 mm. Type, adult ♂ in breeding plumage, taken at Klaver on the Olifants River, Cape Province, October, 1917. Also an immature ♂.

Careful measurements of the long series of specimens shows an extraordinary constancy in the length of the culmen amongst specimens from given ranges, and there is shown to be a graded (though not intergrading) increase in size, of which the following will give a clear idea.

Klaver ... ..	<i>macrorhynchus</i>	20.5-21
Cape Town and Paarl ... ..	<i>capensis</i>	18-19
Knysna ... ..	?	16.5-17
Drakensberg (Natal to Sabie) ... ..	<i>approximans</i>	15-15.5
and of <i>Euplectes xanthomilas</i>		
Woodbush ... ..	—	15-16
Beira and Boror ... ..	—	13.5-14

*Mirafra apiata adendorffi* subsp. nov.

Differs from the typical *Mirafra apiata* (Vieillot) in its larger size, less rufous outer and inner margins to the primaries, and more rufous head and back. There is only a faint trace of black markings on the feathers of the nape and head generally, while on the back the rufous is much more conspicuous, perhaps the effect of wear, but nevertheless much more extended than in typical birds.

Type, adult ♂, taken on the tableland, several thousand feet above the Olifants River at Klaver. It is much larger than an adult male taken at Lormarins and three others from Knysna and Grahamstown. Compared with the first the dimensions are as follows:

	Total Length	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen
Klaver ...	160	87	62	23	13.5
Lormarins	155	77	58	20	12.5

*Proctopus nigricollis gurneyi* subsp. nov.

Gurney (*Ibis*, 1868, p. 263 and 1869, p. 303) pointed out that the South African Eared Grebe, which breeds here, differed from European specimens in being smaller and having the ear coverts pater. This I am able to confirm from an adult ♂ in nuptial dress, taken at Lamberts Bay. The bill is apparently broader, though slightly shorter than in European specimens, and the ear coverts are almost entirely glossy straw yellow, with only a wash of chestnut on the lower fourth. I therefore confer this name upon the S. African birds in recognition of one who contributed much to our knowledge of birds in S. Africa.

Type, ♂, from Lamberts Bay, November, 1917, in Transvaal Museum Collection.